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ABSTRACT

Instructions for the administration of the Opinions about Deaf People Scale are given. This scale measures the beliefs of hearing adults about the capabilities of deaf adults. The somewhat ambiguous title of the instrument is designed to avoid leading respondents to respond in socially desirable ways. The instrument is based on misconceptions hearing adults might hold about the capabilities of deaf adults. The scale can be administered individually or to a group. It is a summative scale, and each subject's score can be calculated by adding the points for all 20 items. A low score reflects a positive attitude about the capabilities of the deaf, while a high score reflects a negative attitude. A scoring key is included. A pilot test with 290 college students supported construct validity and suggested one general deaf capabilities factor, with a few items that correlate moderately to strongly with an intelligence factor. The scale is in Appendix A. (SLD)

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Administration Guide for the Opinions About Deaf People Scale: A Scale to Measure Hearing Adults' Beliefs About The Capabilities of Deaf Adults

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Introduction

The following are administration instructions for the Opinions About Deaf People scale. This scale measures hearing adults' beliefs about the capabilities of deaf adults. It should be apparent that there is a discrepancy between the scale's title and its actual measure. There was some concern that if the intent of the scale was explicitly stated, subjects might respond in a socially desirable manner. That is why the scale's title is somewhat ambiguous. If this scale is used to conduct research, subjects should be debriefed and informed of the scale's true purpose following the collection of data. A reproducible copy of this scale is included in Appendix "A."

Description of the Construct

The instrument was based on misconceptions that hearing adults hold about the capabilities of deaf adults. A list of misconceptions was obtained from deaf-related literature and interviews with deaf professionals. The following is a description of the construct measured by this scale:

General definition. The construct is hearing adults' beliefs about the capabilities of deaf adults. It is assumed that these capabilities are determined by comparing deaf people's capabilities to hearing people's capabilities. The authors conceptualized this construct as a continuum between two types of hearing individuals: ones who believe that deaf people are equally capable as hearing people and ones who believes that deaf people are less capable than hearing people. (It is realized that many people's beliefs are not consistent across all contexts. Many individuals may believe that deaf people are capable in some areas, while not in others.)

Equal capability belief. A hearing adult who believes that deaf adults have equal capabilities believes that deaf people possess the same intelligence and skill level as hearing people, with the exception of the ability to process verbal language and hear. A hearing person who believes in equal capabilities would be aware that there are many low-functioning deaf people who possess low intelligence and abilities, while there are also many low-functioning hearing people in the same situation. More specifically, aspects of the "equal capability" belief were identified from the literature as follows:

1. Belief that the normal distribution of intelligence within the deaf population is comparable to the distribution of intelligence within the hearing population.

2. Belief that deaf people possess the ability to: (a) take care of themselves and live independently; (b) gain and maintain employment in either blue- or white-collar occupations, depending on their qualifications; (c) drive safely on public roads; (d) perform academically on a comparable level with their hearing

peers; and (e) find ways to communicate with hearing people, even when an interpreter is not present.

Administration

This scale can be administered either individually or in a group. Subjects should be given the scale and told to complete all items. If more than one individual is present, subjects should be instructed not to discuss the items amongst each other. If a subject asks for clarification of a particular item or items, the administrator should respond, "It would be better if you decided what this means to you. Why don't you look at the item again and answer it as best as you can." In no case should the administrator explain any of the items to the subjects while they are completing the scale.

Scoring

Total scores. There are 20 items in this scale, worth one to four points each. As this is a summative scale, each subject's score can be calculated by adding up the points for all 20 items. The possible range of scores is from 20 to 80. A low score reflects a positive attitude about the capabilities of deaf adults, while a high score reflects a negative attitude. There are no cut-off points. The scores should be looked upon as indicating degrees of positiveness or negativeness in relationship to the total possible points. Scores below the middle score of 40 lean toward equal capability beliefs, while those above 40 tend toward unequal capability beliefs.

Positive and negative statements. There are 10 positively stated and 10 negatively stated items. Agreement with a negative statement or disagreement with a positive statement reflects a negative attitude toward the capabilities of deaf adults. The positive and negative items were randomly dispersed throughout the scale.

Positive statements. The following points should be assigned for positive statements: Strongly Agree-1, Mildly Agree-2, Mildly Disagree-3, Strongly Disagree-4. The following items are positive statements: 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, and 20.

Negative statements. For the negative statements, the Likert scale needs to be reversed to assign the following points: Strongly Agree-4, Mildly Agree-3, Mildly Disagree-2, Strongly Disagree-1. The following items are negative statements: 1, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16.

Scoring key. On the following pages is a key that will assist you in scoring the items. When scoring the scale, it is best to compare the position of the response circled by the subject to its position on the key to determine the points for each item.

The points in the matching position on the key can then be written next to the item on the subject's scale. (The positive or negative direction of each item is also indicated in parentheses following each item.)

Your Opinions about Deaf People

Key for Scoring

		Agree		Disagree	
1.	Smarter deaf people have better speech than deaf people who are less intelligent. (-)	4	3	2	1
2.	Deaf people drive just as safely as hearing people. (+)	1	2	3	4
3.	A deaf person can have the leadership abilities needed to run an organization. (+)	1	2	3	4
4.	It is unfair to limit deaf people to low-paying, unskilled jobs. (+)	1	2	3	4
5.	A deaf person could get a Ph.D. or a Masters degree. (+)	1	2	3	4
6.	If a boss has a problem with a deaf employee, the boss should talk with the interpreter, rather than the deaf person. (-)	4	3	2	1
7.	A deaf person could be promoted to a management position. (+)	1	2	3	4
8.	An 18-year-old deaf adult is capable of living alone and taking care of him- or herself. (+)	1	2	3	4
9.	It is nearly impossible for a deaf person to keep up with a hearing person in school. (-)	4	3	2	1
10.	It can be frustrating to pay a visit to deaf people because they can't hear you knock at the front door. (-)	4	3	2	1
11.	Deaf people cost tax payers lots of money because they can't keep their jobs. (-)	4	3	2	1
12.	Deaf people should only work in jobs where they don't need to communicate with anyone. (-)	4	3	2	1

		Agree		Disagree	
13.	It is a mistake to leave a baby alone with a deaf person, because he/she can't hear the baby cry. (-)	4	3	2	1
14.	Deaf adults must depend on their parents to make important decisions. (-)	4	3	2	1
15.	Signing is not really a language because only simple thoughts can be communicated. (-)	4	3	2	1
16.	A deaf person could not go to a restaurant without a hearing person, because he/she could not order food without assistance. (-)	4	3	2	1
17.	A deaf person can be an excellent writer. (+)	1	2	3	4
18.	Deaf people are as intelligent as hearing people. (+)	1	2	3	4
19.	If there was a fire, a deaf person could get out of a building safely without help just as easily as a hearing person could. (+)	1	2	3	4
20.	Deaf adults are able to communicate with their hearing children. (+)	1	2	3	4

Reliability and Validity

A pilot was conducted with 290 students (120 males, 167 females, and 3 gender unreported; ages 18-50) enrolled in an upper-division general-education Sociology course. A coefficient alpha of .83 and a split-half reliability of .82 was obtained. Item-total correlations ranged from .22 to .58. Only three correlations were below .30. A factor analysis demonstrated a common factor (Factor 1) with an Eigenvalue of 5.39, accounting for 27% of the variance. Item correlations with this factor ranged from .25 to .67. Although there appears to be one general deaf capabilities factor (Factor 1), a few items (5, 17, and 18) also correlate moderately to strongly with an intelligence factor (Factor 2). This factor had an Eigenvalue of 1.70 and accounted for 8.5% of the variance. The standard error of measurement for this scale was 2.81, and the 95% confidence interval is ± 5.51. Construct validity was established through the administration of Cowen's Attitudes to Deafness scale (Cowen, Bobrove, Rockway, & Stevenson, 1967) following the administration of the authors' scale. The Opinions About Deaf People scale correlated with Cowen's scale at .75 ($p < .001$).

Cowen, E. L., Bobrove, P. H., Rockway, A. M., & Stevenson, J. (1967). Development and evaluation of an attitudes to deafness scale. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 6(2), 183-191.

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A copy of the 121-page technical manual (in press with the ERIC Document Reproduction Service) is available from the authors upon request.

APPENDIX "A"

No. _____

Your Opinions About Deaf People (20-Item Version)

We are asking for your opinions about deaf people. We are not talking about people who have a mild hearing loss or elderly people who have lost their hearing late in life.

To indicate your opinion, please circle:

A If you strongly agree
B If you mildly agree
C If you mildly disagree
D If you strongly disagree

Please complete all items. There are no right or wrong answers.

		Agree		Disagree	
1.	Smarter deaf people have better speech than deaf people who are less intelligent.	A	B	C	D
2.	Deaf people drive just as safely as hearing people.	A	B	C	D
3.	A deaf person can have the leadership abilities needed to run an organization.	A	B	C	D
4.	It is unfair to limit deaf people to low-paying, unskilled jobs.	A	B	C	D
5.	A deaf person could get a Ph.D. or a Masters degree.	A	B	C	D
6.	If a boss has a problem with a deaf employee, the boss should talk with the interpreter, rather than the deaf person.	A	B	C	D
7.	A deaf person could be promoted to a management position.	A	B	C	D
8.	An 18-year-old deaf adult is capable of living alone and taking care of him- or herself.	A	B	C	D
9.	It is nearly impossible for a deaf person to keep up with a hearing person in school.	A	B	C	D

		Agree		Disagree	
10.	It can be frustrating to pay a visit to deaf people because they can't hear you knock at the front door.	A	B	C	D
11.	Deaf people cost tax payers lots of money because they can't keep their jobs.	A	B	C	D
12.	Deaf people should only work in jobs where they don't need to communicate with anyone.	A	B	C	D
13.	It is a mistake to leave a baby alone with a deaf person, because he/she can't hear the baby cry.	A	B	C	D
14.	Deaf adults must depend on their parents to make important decisions.	A	B	C	D
15.	Signing is not really a language because only simple thoughts can be communicated.	A	B	C	D
16.	A deaf person could not go to a restaurant without a hearing person, because he/she could not order food without assistance.	A	B	C	D
17.	A deaf person can be an excellent writer.	A	B	C	D
18.	Deaf people are as intelligent as hearing people.	A	B	C	D
19.	If there was a fire, a deaf person could get out of a building safely without help just as easily as a hearing person could.	A	B	C	D
20.	Deaf adults are able to communicate with their hearing children.	A	B	C	D

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